

Beach commission Minutes- Meeting of 01/14/2014

Attending: Rian Wilkinson, Bill Seiple, John Ceglarski, Henry Pine, Will Cronin, Steve Ponte

1. Open Meeting at 4:30

2. Approved minutes of 12/10/2013 - No changes or corrections

3. Contract Beach Parking

Will Cronin contacted, Bob Paquette (RI DEM) ,about their contract parking program. A Connecticut firm administers all parking at the DEM beach/ lake facilities. They guarantee minimums with adjustments. This is the last year of the contract and the state is not sure if it will be renewed.

Rian spoke to Steve Wright, Rec. Director, Town of Narragansett and he recommended that we DO NOT use a contract system. He felt you lose too much control of your beach operation. *When Mr Wright worked for the DEM, he, actually, wrote the present state contract.**

Discussion:

The state has, approximately, 6 major ocean/ lake facilities. Each facility has, usually, only 1 or 2 entrances. This makes parking easy to manage and reduces employees, which is a major benefit for the contractor. However, Second/Third has 6 collection lots and 1 “pass only” lot. This, it would seem, would reduce the “guarantee” since it is a very labor intensive operation.

Due to these numerous entrances, at Second, there is continuous rotation of staff. It has taken years of practice to make Second Beach work as well as it does.

Members were also concerned that some non-residents would be

hired by a contract agency. This would reduce employment of local youth.

Discussion continued to February meeting.

4. Reserved Beach Parking spaces

Option #1-

a. **Golden Pass.** This would be a pass that could be purchased at additional cost, possibly \$250-\$500. It would guarantee the purchaser a designated spot for the entire summer.

Problems-

- 1- The buyer would take a spot from a resident or pass holder.**
- 2- Some members felt that the ability to buy an expensive pass should not be a criteria for having a guaranteed space vs someone with limited means.**
- 3- The guaranteed spaces would have to be monitored by beach staff.**
- 4- Possible discord when someone, who has waited an hour in line, sees a car “buck the line” and take a space.**

Positives-

- 1- Possible additional income source for the town.**

Option #2

b. **Reserved space for Residents Only....** A number of reserved spaces (Example: 100 on each side of the main parking lot) would be allocated to residents, on a “first come” basis.

Problems:

- 1- Residents would, probably, fill the spaces by 11:00am, or earlier, on a typical week-end. Some residents may think that there will**

be “guaranteed” spaces throughout the day.

2- Spaces would have to be monitored by a high number of beach staff...possibly 4+ per

Section.

3- Conflicts- when non-residents see open spaces as they wait in line.

Narragansett Town Beach does allocate certain lots for residents only. However, Mr Wright says they fill up and residents still have to wait in line.

*****Important to note that Narragansett charges not only for cars, but for “walk-ons”. That’s a major reason that they can reserve lots for resident parking. Non-residents may find alternate parking, but still have to pay a fee to go to the beach.

In general, members felt this would be impossible to enforce and wouldn’t alleviate the resident parking concerns. It could, possibly, affect beach revenue. Beach Commission agreed that residents should realize that if they do not get to the beach early on week- ends, they may not get a parking space.

Continued to February meeting.

5. Project List

The Beach Commission and Will Cronin reviewed the Project List-

started in the fall. At least 75% have been discussed or implemented. In many cases, they have been forwarded to the town for action.

Boat Ramp-

Steve Ponte recommended that a small number of temporary floating docks be installed. They would be removed after the season. The docks would allow easier boat access and a space to tie their boats, on a short term basis...i.e. to unload etc.

Steve said that, last summer, a patron had offered to pay for the docks. The Beach Commission recommended that Steve discuss this with Tom O'Loughlin and town administration.

Endorsement- The Beach commission voted, unanimously, to endorse the Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resiliency Competitive Grant Program.

Meeting adjourned at 5:50